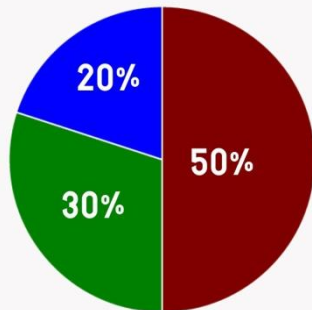


### Cleaning up: How Washington funds litter collection and waste reduction

Washington's beauty is natural. Keeping it that way takes hard work – and hard currency.

For the 2013-2015 biennium, Ecology's \$9.7 million Waste Reduction Recycling and Litter Control Account (WRRLCA) budget is split three ways: 50 percent, or about \$5 million, goes toward litter pickup and prevention through the Ecology Youth Corps and other state agency programs. Thirty percent of the account, or \$3 million, is spent on waste reduction and recycling efforts, and 20 percent, or \$2 million, goes to local governments under the Community Litter Cleanup Program.

Together, these programs have picked up 5.8 million pounds of litter and cleaned 33,000 miles of roads and highways in 2013-2015 (through December 2014). Although those figures are impressive, they are running behind past performance because of diversions from WRRLCA to the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account.



#### Litter Tax Distribution

50% Litter pickup  
30% Waste reduction and recycling  
20% Local governments

#### Cleaning up

The most visible use of WRRLCA is supporting the Ecology Youth Corps. Each year, this program hires several hundred teenagers across the state to pick up roadside litter and clean up illegal dumps.



#### WHY IT MATTERS

In 1971, the Washington Legislature enacted a 0.015-percent tax on items commonly found in roadside litter, such as bottles, cigarettes and food packaging. Although small, this tax generates about \$9 million a year, which is deposited in the Waste Reduction Recycling and Litter Control Account and dedicated to funding litter pickup and prevention, waste reduction and recycling programs.

For calendar year 2014, Ecology-funded programs picked up 1,823 tons of litter and cleaned 20,242 miles of road statewide.

#### Contact information

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#### More information

Litter –  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/litter](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/litter)  
Recycling data -  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata)  
Community Litter Cleanup Grants –  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/grants/clcp.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/grants/clcp.html)

#### Special accommodations

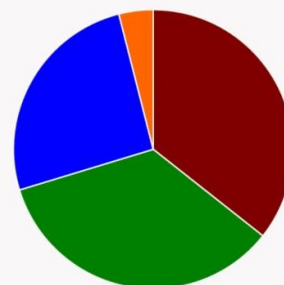
If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Waste 2 Resources program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Since its inception, more than 12,000 teens have participated in the program, gaining valuable job skills, teamwork experience, safety awareness, and learning about environmental topics. The program also hires adult crews to clean up medians and other challenging areas.

### Cleaning Up

In 2014, WRRLCA funds helped to pick up more than 2 million pounds of litter. Who did the heavy lifting?

Ecology Youth Corps - 700,000  
 Local Governments - 735,000  
 Department of Corrections - 521,000  
 Department of Natural Resources - 74,000



In calendar year 2014, Ecology crews picked up almost 700,000 pounds of litter and cleaned 4,500 miles of highway. Both of those figures are down compared to previous years due to budget cuts.

### Reducing waste, improving recycling

The 30 percent of WRRLCA funds that go toward reducing waste and boosting recycling produces important environmental and economic benefits for our state. In 2013, more than 50 percent of the waste generated by Washington residents and businesses was recycled or diverted from landfills – one of the highest rates in the country. While reducing the amount of waste going to landfills is an important goal in its own right, recycling also reduces pollution and conserves natural resources.

In 2013, 8 million tons of material was collected for recycling in Washington. This effort saved the energy equivalent of 1 billion gallons of gasoline, or more than 128 trillion British thermal units (BTUs) of energy – enough to power almost 1.3 million homes for a year, or nearly half the households in Washington. Manufacturing recycled products requires, on average, 17 times less energy than manufacturing the same products from virgin materials. Finally, recycling keeps materials out of landfills where they can contaminate groundwater and generate methane, a greenhouse gas.

### Continuing needs, limited resources

The success of Washington's waste reduction efforts was built on partnerships between Ecology, local governments and solid waste companies. Recent reductions, however, have reduced Ecology's ability to connect these partners and coordinate our state's efforts. Some examples:

- Reducing the amount of litter picked up through all state programs by more than 40 percent in the 2013-2015 biennium, and cutting the miles cleaned by nearly half.
- Suspending school recycling and waste reduction programs.
- Suspending litter prevention work such as the successful "Litter and it will Hurt" campaign, which reduced litter by 25 percent.
- Eliminating 13 positions over the past six years that provided regulatory and technical assistance on recycling and composting programs.
- Cutting strategic investments in new recycling programs aimed at problem wastes such as plastic bags and packaging, which clog sorting systems and lead to illegal dumping.